



EXHORTATION!

NEWS BULLETIN OF THE STRAWBRIDGE SHRINE

The Strawbridge Shrine  New Windsor, MD
The First Home of American Methodism

May 1, 2021

2650 Strawbridge Lane, New Windsor, MD 21776

Vol. XXVI, No. 1

BACK TO THE FUTURE

"You're a history organization, why are you always talking about the future?"

We can imagine that regular readers of this news bulletin might ask that question. Since its inception in 1939, the [Strawbridge Shrine Association](#) has always been focused on the future. At first, it was the future plan to acquire the thirty acre site that was documented as the first home in the colonies of Robert and Elizabeth Strawbridge and the first home of Methodism in America.

When that was accomplished; more talk of the future. When can we open the house to pilgrims? How can we make the Evans House available to visitors? When can we open a Visitors Center? How can we include the Log Meeting House?

It seems we're kind of hung up on the future. Future plans. Future displays. Future events. But the one "Future" that has always been our guidestar is "Future Generations." We have always wanted to do everything we could to ensure that Future Generations had access to the wonderful heritage sites and stories that - by reminding us where we have come from - help to shape where we are going.

This past year may have felt to you like the world had pushed the "pause" button. Certainly it has felt like that in many ways for the Strawbridge Shrine Association. No tours. No Colonial Day. No services. No classes. But if anything, this past year has made us even more aware of - and more excited about - the Future. It has made us anxious to again share this amazing site with pilgrims. It has made us eager to again welcome confirmation classes and families. And it has given us fuel to think about what our next "When can we...?" project will be.

(Continued on Page 2)

POULSON HEADSTONES FIND A NEW HOME AT THE SHRINE

By Beth Sansbury

Andrew Poulson and his wife, Prudence Evans, came to Carroll County sometime in the 1760s. He was a neighbor of Robert Strawbridge, who began his Second Class in Poulson's home. When the crowds were too large, he preached under a huge oak tree there, which became known as the Strawbridge Oak. Prudence's brother, John Evans, became the first recorded Methodist convert. Poulson donated the land for the [Stone Chapel](#), which was called Poulson's Chapel at first.

In modern times, The Poulson's family graveyard was shorn of its gravestones to make way for a gravel pit, and some of the stones were moved to the basement of the Stone Chapel. Plans are being made to place the gravestones in a small fenced re-created cemetery somewhere on the Shrine grounds. The stones were moved a few months ago to the basement of the Evans House where they could be examined and their condition assessed. Some are in pieces and are too fragile to be set upright again. They can, however, be laid on their backs with a transparent cover over them. The rest can be set upright in a trench with gravel and dirt tamped down around them.



Cornelius Poulson footstone

Beth Sansbury, a Poulson descendant, researched how the people belonging to the gravestones fit into the Poulson family tree. Andrew and Prudence had three sons and three daughters, but the number of family members buried

(Continued on page 2)

CURATOR'S CORNER:

Thank God for the Promise of Springtime!

Helen Kemp, Curator

This is perhaps the most beautiful season at the Strawbridge Shrine in New Windsor, Maryland, Carroll County. As the flowers bud and blossom it brings such a feeling of hope after such a long trial.

It also emphasizes the hope and inspiration that Robert and Elizabeth Strawbridge brought and shared through the Gospel of Jesus Christ. They left their homeland, Ireland, for an infant country. They were not sent here by a church appointment but by a spiritual commitment made of their own deliberate choice. They did not come to create history, nor establish landmarks, but to bring to people a message of hope that transcends time and continues to change lives.

We are looking forward to meeting our visitors and sharing their story. Already there are people finding the Shrine again, walking our lane and spending time outdoors on our peaceful campus. At this time, we are preparing to re-open our historic buildings after the COVID-19 virus closures and spring cleaning. Our visitors are requested to continue to observe the COVID-19 rules: masks, and social distancing and groups of not more than ten persons for the safety and well-being of all our guests.

As Curator, I am available for speaking engagements and will be able to conduct Shrine tours throughout all of our buildings soon. In anticipation of that time please contact me through our website by clicking on "[Tours](#)" or by calling 410-635-2600. There is no charge for tours but donations are always appreciated.

HEADSTONES

(Continued from Page 1)

there was small because the farm was sold out of the family in 1831, and three of the children with their families moved to Ohio and Pennsylvania. The gravestones examined so far belong to Andrew Poulson, his son Cornelius, Cornelius' wife Rachel and their two sons, Elias and Levi. Daughter Margaret's daughter, Betsey Durbin, is also represented, having died at the age of eight. In May the stones will be cleaned and rubbings made of their carvings in order to ensure correct identification.

Beth Sansbury is the author of *THE STRAWBRIDGE SHRINE: ITS ROLE IN METHODIST HISTORY AND A TOUR OF THE SITE* published by Wolfe Hill Publishing. Look for her other titles which are available on [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com).

THE FUTURE

(Continued from Page 1)

In this edition of "EXHORTATION!" you will read about one new project that has been born in this year; a plan to care for the historic headstones of the Poulson Family cemetery (now part of property owned by a quarry). And in a future edition you will read about new research around the barn - a piece of nineteenth century history in itself that we now think might contain elements that date back to Robert and Elizabeth's time!

Also in the works are new signs to enhance our visitor experience, new infrastructure to improve our maintenance capabilities, and new stormwater management to protect and preserve our historic buildings. And, of course, we are looking at when we can safely resume tours and events.

With so much to look forward to, how can we not be fixated on the future?

In the movie *Back to the Future*, the main character needed a bolt of lightning to strike at an exact place and an exact time to get to the future. Here at the Shrine, we need something less dramatic, but more predictable - we need your support.

The gifts of our members and supporters have carried us forward for all these many years and through many projects since 1939. In this past "pause" year, your support has been a life-sustaining blessing. And now we continue count on you to propell the Shrine into the future as the world hits "play" again.

Included with this news bulletin is your annual [membership/donation form](#). Please fill it out and return it with your contribution today. There are many ways to express your support; as an annual member, or as a meaningful gift in honor or in memory of someone. A gift to the Preservation Fund will be earmarked for the care of our historic buildings. Gifts to the Endowment fund help to assure the future, by creating investment income.

And in addition to these much needed monetary contributions, we ask that you give something else. Give your voice. Talk about the Strawbridge Shrine to your friends, your congregation, your pastor. Talk about history; John Wesley, Francis Asbury, John Street Church, Old St. George's, Lovely Lane, Sharp Street. Give your witness that our shared heritage matters. That's a gift that you can give for free... to Future Generations.

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The Strawbridge Shrine Association

The First Home of American Methodism

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- Type of Membership: (please select one)
- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual Membership.....\$40.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining.....\$100.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Couple's Membership.....\$60.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> Sponsor.....\$250.00 |
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Date of birth: _____

Membership includes:

- ✓ Admission to all events of the Strawbridge Shrine Association
- ✓ Donor Listing
- ✓ 10% Discount at the Gift Shop
- ✓ Subscriptions to *Exhortation!*, *The News Bulletin of the Strawbridge Shrine*
- ✓ And, of course, support for the Preservation and Programs of the unique birthplace of the worldwide United Methodist Denomination!

- Additional Contribution: (please select as many as apply)
- In addition to membership I / We are adding a donation of \$ _____
 - I would like to support the Preservation Fund with a donation of \$ _____
 - I / We do not wish to become a member, but please accept a donation of \$ _____

Special Gift:

- A donation of \$ _____ In Memory of _____
- A donation of \$ _____ In Honor of _____

Member Information:

(please print)

NAME(S) _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP CODE _____

E.MAIL _____

PHONE (BEST) _____

Please make your check or money order to:

Strawbridge Shrine Association, Inc.

2200 St. Paul Street
Baltimore, MD 21218

The Strawbridge Shrine Association, Inc., is a non-profit 501(c)(3) entity. Your contribution is tax-deductible.



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Self-nominations for Board Members and
Officers now being accepted

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

THE QUESTION ON EVERYONE'S MIND

"When will the Strawbridge Shrine re-open for visitors?"

The question you are asking is the question we have been asking ourselves.
Our answer has been guided by three things:

1. The health and safety of our visitors.
2. The health and safety of our volunteers.
3. Knowing that "re-opening" would never be a one-step process.



With these principals in mind, we have been looking at the COVID-19 infection rates in Maryland, DC and surrounding states as well as the percentage of the population vaccinated. Importantly, we have wanted to ensure that visitors to the site could come, confident that their tour guide has been fully vaccinated and educated in proper protocols.

Already, visitors are coming to drive through or for self-guided visits to the grounds in small groups. Our plan is to begin conducting tours and allowing visits inside the buildings for groups of ten people or less starting July 1, 2021. Masks will continue to be required and we will limit the number of persons inside the buildings in turns.

We will continue to monitor [CDC guidelines](#) and the news for that desired 80% vaccination rate when we can begin to welcome larger groups and again plan public events.

In the meantime, please check our website for updates or, best of all, call the Curator at 410-635-2600 for the most up-to-date information.